

ACADEMIC FREEDOM: THE FSM AND PARTICLE-BERKELEY

One of the most recent of the charges made against the FSM is that the members are not interested in obtaining an education, that the ESM is blocking education. This is an interesting accusation, for it brings up the questions: what is education, and, how is it furthered in a university community. Basically, the aims of education are two-fold: one, to train a mind to think independently and logically; two, to acquaint a mind with ideas - ideas of the past and of the present - and to infuse it with a desire to put these ideas before the society at large. A university should be a forum for ideas, a place where the expression and the communication of ideas is furthered in every way possible. Classes, ideally, should represent an exchange of ideas by teacher and pupil; and, in order to reach a larger audience, members of the university community should have the greatest conceivable latitude in expressing their thoughts, both orally and on paper. As Everyone knows, this has not been the case at Berkeley this semester.

I am not going to talk about the restrictions which were placed upon speakers on campus. You are all aware of the sections in the FSM platform concerning these. I want to speak about the most ignored section of the FSM platform: the section requesting permission to sell on-campus non-commercial literature containing less than 25% advertising. In effect, the current restrictions ban the selling on campus of at least one academic journal, Particle magazine, a quarterly by hand for people interested in science. Particle accepts articles written by students many, but most certainly not all of whom attend UC at Berkeley. It has been commended by the U. S. State Dept. for its role as the only American magazine devoted solely to student research. Particle may not be sold from a table on campus not only because it contains advertising, but also because its staff is not composed solely of Cal students. Now a magazine without an outside subsidy must either accept advertising or sell at a prohibitive cost. It is simply not possible to comply with a regulation condemning all advertising. But the requirement that only Berkeley students may work on the magazine evidences a narrow provincialism on the part of the administration. Does it believe that the Berkeley campus can exist as an open forum for all ideas if all ideas are defined as those thoughts indigenous to Berkeley? Censorship is simply not compatible with the operation of a great school. To quote Robert Hutchins, a university "is a center of independent thought and criticism, where everything may be discussed. A 'non-controversial' university is a contradiction in terms. A university where no debate is going on is as good as dead."

Students who recognize the dangers of restricting political activity must also realize that such restrictions never end in that one sphere of activity which they intend to regulate. Inevitably, these restrictions must spread - have spread. Is it injurious to the precious reputation of UC to have student academic journals sold on campus? Is it anarchistic to desire the communication of new intellectual matters to the general university society? Do not allow this university to abridge education here while maintaining that it is the FSM instead which is undermining the function of this or any other university.

Barbara Goldberg
President, Particle-Berkeley